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Sermon on the Epistle-Lesson for Trinity Sunday.

ROM. 11, 33—36.

This Sunday is called Festival of the Holy Trinity, or, to circumscribe it, it is dedicated to the contemplation and the praise of the Triune God. Last Sunday we witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the twelve apostles and dwelt upon His work here upon earth. That was devoted to the third person of the Holy Trinity. On the other festivals preceding Pentecost, Easter, Good Friday, New Year, and Christmas, we directed our attention to the person and work of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead. To-day we shall meditate on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, of all the three persons in God, and of the wonderful works and ways of this Triune God.

I say that the Holy Trinity itself and the works of the Triune God are a mystery. They are something we cannot understand or grasp with our power of reason. We naturally know that there is a God, indeed. Everybody's conscience tells him so. There is a voice within the breast of man which tells him that there is a God who will punish evil and reward good. Nobody can wholly suppress this voice in his heart. Even the vilest infidels and atheists, though they profess not to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, feel the conviction, at least at times, that there must be a God, nevertheless. Then, too, the contemplation of nature, of this mighty universe, with its millions of stars soaring as it were, in the ethereal heights, supported by an unseen hand, this mighty machinery of our earth, where everything seems to go on at random, and yet all things run on in beautiful harmony,—all this reminds one involuntarily of the existence of some almighty and all-wise Being which created all this and rules it so well.

That is the natural knowledge of God, because it is a knowledge which we have by nature and get from nature. This natural knowl-

edge of God everybody has. We find it even among the heathen, who have strayed away so far from the knowledge of the true God and sunk to the deepest depths of intellectual and moral depravity. There is not a single people in all the wide world that does not worship, in some manner, shape, or form, some deity or gods. They all have retained an indistinct knowledge and conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being, and they try to find it and to serve it. The heathen, therefore, themselves are one of the mightiest proofs for the existence of God.

But although we all have a natural knowledge of God, yet this knowledge is not sufficient to know the true God and, consequently, not sufficient to obtain salvation. For God is beyond our conception, and we are not able to fathom either His essence or His ways. And it is this that our text puts us in mind of. There Paul exclaims: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Let us, therefore, now endeavor to learn from the text that

OUR GOD IS UNSEARCHABLE AND PAST FINDING OUT.

This is true,

1. *In regard to His nature and essence,*
2. *In regard to His ways and judgments.*

1.

God's nature and essence are beyond our conception; they are unsearchable and past finding out. That is the first point we want to consider. Although our text does not treat of this explicitly, yet we find it intimated at least at the close, where St. Paul says: "For of Him," *i. e.*, of God, "and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever! Amen." This threefold relation, in which the creatures are here placed towards God (*of* Him, and *through* Him, and *to* Him), is undoubtedly meant as an indication of the personal Trinity of God. The meaning is this: All creatures are *of* the Father, He is the author of them; they are *through* the Son, for of Him John says in his Gospel: "By it" (the Word, or Son) "all things were made, and without it not anything was made that was made;" and all things are *to* the Holy Ghost, that He may sanctify them and thus bring them to glorify and praise His name. Here, then, we have an intimation of the glorious mystery of the Holy Trinity, of the fact that our God, being only one God, one in essence, is triune in persons.

This doctrine, that God is a triune God, we find still more clearly expressed in various other passages of Scripture than in our Epistle-lesson. Already in the Old Testament God had revealed Himself as triune in persons. In the very first words of the Bible, to-wit, in the

first chapter of Genesis, we read of the third person of the Godhead, of the Spirit, that He "moved on the face of the waters." And a little further on in the chapter, God, when about to create man, says to Himself: "Let us make men," etc., showing thereby that there must be more persons than one. We read in one of the Psalms (33, 6) concerning the work of the creation: "By the Word of the Lord," *i. e.*, the personal Word, "were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath" (Spirit) "of His mouth." Furthermore, in various passages of the Old Testament we find that, in references made to God, the number three is observed. Thus, for instance, in the benediction with which we close our services. For this was given by God to the children of Israel in the Old Testament. We find it Numb. 6, 23—26, where we read: "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Observe the three-fold repetition of the name of God. Now let us turn to Is. 6, 3. There the two seraphims standing before the throne of God cry with a loud voice, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." Here again the word "holy," applied to God, is repeated three times. These passages, taken together, certainly prove, although not as plainly as the New Testament, that God is triune in persons.

The full light, also in this respect, shone forth during the glorious time of the new dispensation. There we meet with the wonderful revelation of all three persons at the baptism of Christ, where the Son, or the second person, stands in the river Jordan and is baptized, the Father calls from heaven, "This is my beloved Son," etc., and the Holy Ghost descends from heaven in the shape of a dove. There we find, furthermore, the mighty and indisputable words of Christ: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc. There we read in the First Epistle of John: "There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word," *i. e.*, the Son, or second person, "and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." Who that means to accept the Bible could dare, in the face of these clear testimonies, to deny that our God is triune in persons? Who could dare to deny the trinity of God?

And yet, though the Bible so plainly teaches that there are three persons in the Godhead, yet it teaches just as plainly, at the same time, that there is only *one* God. Regarding this point, we again read also in the Old Testament: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is *one* Lord." The Jews never believed in more than one God; they always held that there was only one. They worshiped Jehovah, the one and only God. And so do the Christians in the New Testament.

The apostles and evangelists, the writers of the New Testament, are, if possible, still more emphatic in their declarations of the unity of God than is Moses in the Old Testament. Let me quote only a few passages. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians (1. Ep. 8, 4): "There is none other God but one." The same apostle writes to the Ephesians (ch. 4, 6): "One God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And to Timothy (1. Ep. 2, 5): "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." What mighty proofs these are for the fact that God, although triune in persons, nevertheless is one in essence, that there are not three gods, but that there is only one God!

Now who is there, my friends, that can understand this? Who can fathom this mystery: three, and yet only one? three persons, but only one God? Who can understand it? Ah, we must stand awestricken before this mystery and confess: O the depth of the riches of God's being and essence! How unsearchable is our God and altogether past finding out! Truly, this Triune God, this God who is three in one, nobody can know merely by the light of nature. This God we can only learn to know from His Word, where He has revealed Himself to us. Oh, let us, then, accept what this Word teaches us regarding Him! Let us not try to understand Him, to solve the mystery, but simply accept in childlike faith what He tells us of Himself in His Word. For he that, following the cavilings of his reason, rejects this Triune God, shuts himself out from His communion, from the heaven He proffers; such a person, though he may profess to worship a god in reality, has no God, but makes an idol unto himself and worships that. Let him beware of God's threat: "I the Lord that," etc.

2.

And now we have arrived at the second portion of our text, in which we intend to contemplate the wonderful ways and judgments of God. It is this that our text principally treats of, and more at length. Of this it is that St. Paul says: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," etc. Here, then, Paul mentions especially two things; he speaks of God's judgments and of God's ways, and he says of both that they are unsearchable and past finding out.

With "judgments" he evidently means those judgments or punishments with which God visits men for sins and iniquities. In the first place, we may well refer it to the eternal punishment of God which He will bring upon the wicked. The Bible clearly teaches that those who here on earth persist in sin, reject the true God, and die without faith in the salvation from sin and its consequences which God has provided for us in Jesus, shall be visited with an endless punishment of their sins in the flames and tortures of hell. "These

shall go away into everlasting punishment," says Christ Himself of the wicked. Ah, who can understand this? Why should a temporal sin merit eternal punishment? Why should God forever reject the wicked from His face? Why should His eternal punishment and judgment come upon them? This not only seems inexplicable to our reason, nay, it is repulsive to it. Reason will deny that God punishes sin forever, and there are many that would be Christians who deny it in the face of Scripture.

Then, too, we may well explain "judgments" here to mean the temporal judgments and punishments of God for sins committed. Our reason can well understand how sin must bring the wrath and judgment of a holy and righteous God upon its perpetrator. But what goes beyond our power of comprehension here is the way in which these judgments of God come down upon mankind. We often see that the punishments of God are visited not merely upon the guilty, but upon the innocent as well. In times of great calamities, of war, or earthquakes, or cyclones, floods, and the like, not only the wicked are destroyed and killed, but the righteous only too often perish with the wicked. Yea, it not unfrequently happens that the children of God meet with death or misfortune in such calamities, while the children of the world are spared. Christ Himself at one time said to the Jews regarding those people who had been killed by Herod at the sacrifice, as well as of those upon whom the tower at Siloam fell, that they were not sinners above and beyond others, that it was not on account of their wickedness that this judgment of God had come upon them. But He admonished the others to take warning in view of these facts, and to repent of their sins, lest they, too, perish in like manner. And in the life of the individual, why is it that one person is born into the world a cripple, or blind, or afflicted with some other defect, while others are born sound and healthy? Why is it that one person is crippled during his lifetime, while others are left to remain in full possession of their limbs and in good health? Ah, here again we must exclaim with Paul: "How unsearchable are His judgments!"

To this Paul adds, in the second place: "And His ways past finding out." He evidently refers especially to those ways of God which He leads the whole human race and people in general, and individuals in particular. We shall apply it only to the wonderful way which God has adopted to save lost mankind. Surely, that is something our reason can never understand: "God so loved the world," etc. This sinful mankind, which hated God, which did everything it could do to displease and insult Him, this mankind God loved so intensely that for their sake He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to redeem them. He gave them the nearest and dearest He had in order to save them. Who can understand this love of God

towards His enemies? And what a wonderful way He chooses to effect their redemption: He sends His Son, who adopts the human nature, becomes a man, and then dies for the sinners, thus atoning for their sins and satisfying the divine justice! Think of it: God dying in the place of sinners to satisfy His own justice and to appease His own wrath against them! Ah, this way of God in redeeming sinners certainly is past our finding out.

And so are also His ways in applying this salvation to mankind. The Bible clearly teaches that God desires to save all men, that He wishes to have all men become partakers of the redemption of Christ. And yet what do we see? There are millions and millions of sinners who, nevertheless, are lost and do not become partakers of salvation. There are whole nations which God has allowed to live on in total ignorance of the way of salvation for hundreds and thousands of years, who never as much as had salvation offered to them, while others He has chosen for His own peculiar treasure and has given them the light of salvation, as, *e. g.*, the Jews in the Old Testament and the various Christianized nations in the New Testament, among whom also we are to be found. Yet, again, with individuals God's ways are wonderful. One person, who is no better nor worthier than another, is privileged to have pious, God-fearing parents that bring him up in a Christian way and lead him to a knowledge of Christ, while another is led into the claws of the devil by wicked parents. One who has been wicked for a long time, by God's wonderful ways is led to Christ in the end, while another apostatizes and finally is lost!

"O the depth of the riches," etc. Amen.

G. L.

Sermon on Luke 19, 1—10.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." O wondrous, astonishing message: Jesus a friend of the sinners, a friend of those who repaid His divine goodness with disobedience, who robbed Him of His glory and ascribed it to graven images! Of God's perfect and glorious creation man has made a vale of tears, a house of lamentation, a habitation of the Evil One. And yet the Lord came not to judge these spoilers of His work; He came to save them. Behold the Infant, the joy of the angels, the Son of God, in a miserable stable, the shelter for beasts of burden, worshiped by but a few shepherds! Behold the lonely couple urging onward towards Egypt to escape the enmity of the malicious Herod! Behold the Messiah expelled from Nazareth by His own fellow-citizens! See the armed band sent out to apprehend Him in the darkness of the night as though He were a dangerous character!

Follow me into the common hall, and see the band of soldiers stripping Him, putting on Him a scarlet robe, plating a crown of thorns and pressing it into His head! Hear them mocking, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Like a criminal and with criminals Jesus was crucified on Mount Calvary by His own people and the heathen. And yet He loves His very murderers. O love divine! O golden words, words well worthy to inscribe in the heart, to impress on the memory, and to weigh them in the mind day by day, syllable by syllable: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

This end and object for which the second person of the Godhead departed from the throne of majesty to be made flesh and to become a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, the object of this marvellous act is exemplified by Christ's dealings with the publican in the text read. Basing my discourse upon the extract read, permit me to set forth:

JESUS, THE FRIEND OF THE FORLORN AND PENITENT
SINNERS.

1. *He is come to seek and to save sinners.*
2. *He is come to give them abiding peace.*

1.

Zacchaeus, of whom the text makes mention, was the chief of the publicans, the tax-collectors. The publicans were despised and hated by every one because of their cruelty and lack of compassion when they collected taxes, especially hated by the Jews, because they were officials of the Roman empire, which had taken from them the right and benefits of self-government. They regarded them as thieves and cheats, and accused them of unlawful appropriation of what was intrusted to their care. And in fact, the majority of the publicans had made themselves guilty of embezzlement, Zacchaeus, the chief, notwithstanding. He, too, could not stand the test of integrity. He hoarded up wealth and accumulated riches, not by conscientiously fulfilling his duty towards the State, but by defrauding and cheating. His guilt is evidenced not so much by the murmuring of the Jews, for that might have been an expression of their hatred against all publicans, as by his own confession: "What I have taken from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." The chief of the publicans was therefore none the less hated and shunned. In the eyes of the Jews he was on a level with a dog. And yet, behold Jesus, the incarnated Son of God, the Holy One, walking up to this publican, to this thief and embezzler, parting from the multitude that followed, as though the publican were the only companion He desired, as though He considered the multitude, the scribes, and the priests unworthy, and the publican alone worthy to walk at His side, and to give Him shelter under his roof. He does not condemn him,

but bids him follow, saying, "Make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

The scribes and Pharisees at one time called Jesus the friend of publicans and sinners, and though they said it with malice and scorn in their hearts, yet they spoke the truth. In all His walk and conversation Jesus proved Himself the friend of the forlorn and penitent sinners. Continually did He travel about in Judea and Galilee, helping the helpless and comforting the comfortless. Never did He reject a single one who came to Him seeking deliverance from sin and its consequences. Complacently did He bear the scornful sneers of malicious men, if He could only save a soul. And to save this chief of the publicans from sin, eternal death, and everlasting damnation, that alone was the end and aim of His visit with him.

And how was this brought about? How was the publican saved? How was he converted? Was it by his own decision? Was it by some magic power? Was his conversion and salvation wrought simply by Christ's omnipotence? Indeed not, but by the words Christ spoke to him. And it is clear that Christ's conversation with the publican comprised more than the few words recorded in our text. The publican was a hardened, a callous sinner. His heart was filled with extreme wickedness. His only desire was the gratification of his avaricious greed, to hoard up wealth by all means. He inquired not and cared not if his actions were right or wrong. He did as he pleased, and did not ask the advice of God. And now Jesus crosses his path, plies the Law on his stony heart, lashes his conscience, and convicts him of the truth: Zacchaeus, thou art a sinner, and the wages of sin is death. Wrath is upon thee, and thou shalt reap what thou hast sown. Thou treasurest up against thyself wrath, and the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment is coming. Thou hast sinned against God, the Most High. God spared not me, His own Son, but delivered me up for thee, and dost thou live in sin, and wilt thou slight the riches of divine goodness and continue in sin? Christ urges the accusations, threats, and curses of the Law on his conscience, so that he is terrified at the wrath and punishment coming, and is filled with remorse over his sin. The publican does not deny or palliate his sins, but unreservedly acknowledges himself worthy of death and the torments of hell. His heart's pride is humbled, its carnal security destroyed, its hardness broken. — And now that the Law has done its preparatory work, the sweet, beseeching, pleading, and persuading strains of the Gospel are poured forth into his heart. Those stern eyes of the Master are now resting upon this trembling piece of clay with infinite goodness. Those lips, from which seemed to dart the flames of hell-fire, he hears utter words as a loving mother would whisper into her darling's ear. But no, thou

shalt not perish; thou shalt not suffer eternal death; thou shalt live, thou shalt be saved. It is thy Savior, thy Redeemer, who to-day has come to thy house. I have fulfilled the Law for thee. I will make atonement for thy sins. Here is forgiveness, here is grace, here is righteousness, here is the water of life. Come and drink! Fix thy eyes upon me, and behold with thy own eyes the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. By this ministration of the Gospel faith was kindled in the heart of the publican. He knew that in himself he was unworthy to stand before God, but knew also that for Christ's sake he was acceptable in the sight of God. Christ granted and enabled this broken-hearted sinner to believe that He is the propitiation for his sins. Soul and body, the power of the mind and the sensation of the body, remained the same, but his will, his understanding, his mind, his inner life, had undergone a change. He no more wants to walk after his own mind; his desire is to walk after the mind of God, revealed in His Word. He no longer wants to live unto himself, but unto Him who would die for him. He burned every bridge which linked him to this world, and followed Christ. Half of his goods he gave to the poor, and where he had taken anything by false accusation, that he restored fourfold. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Truly, Jesus had come to seek and to save that publican.

Now Christ is to-day none the less bent upon the salvation of each and every sinner; but even now He seeks and saves sinners in no other way than He did the chief of the publicans, *i. e.*, through the ministration of the Word of God, as St. Paul also writes: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Wherever and whenever the promises of the Gospel are proclaimed, Jesus pleadingly addresses sinful mankind as He did the publican: "Make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." O blessed fact, O wondrous act, O love, fathomless and divine: Christ, the Son of God, even to this day, despises not us sinners, but comes to us! And well that He does; for of his own accord man will nevermore come before God to present himself for conversion to Christ. As man is by nature, he can and will have no communion with God. He is alienated from God, and there is a partition and a separation between him and God. He is corrupt in his nature, turned away from God with heart and soul and all his powers unto that which is displeasing and hateful to God, and inclined to all evil. Of himself man is not aware of his corrupt and contaminated condition, is not alive to the enormity of his sins, does not believe that God will hurl him into everlasting damnation because of his manifold transgressions. But he must come to a knowledge of his sins, his heart must be filled with remorse for his evil deeds, with terror at the judgment coming, before conversion can take place, before the seed of the Gospel can strike

root in his heart. Now of himself man can and will not prepare his heart for the glad and saving tidings of the Gospel. So God must first come to him, and swing the rod and hammer of the Law over him. Proclaiming the Law, God urges it upon the sinner, What have you done? You have sinned against God, whose very essence is holiness, against the Supreme Judge. You have disgraced every virtue, and trampled under foot the sacred rights of God and man. You are a sinner, and the wages of sin is death. You shall reap what you have sown, wrath is upon you. Ah! — you will earnestly strive to do better hereafter? You will bend every energy to obtain by your works a righteousness which is valid before God? My friend, you will find it a task a thousand and a million times beyond your strength and ability. Or do I hear you boast of your civil righteousness, your official righteousness, your worldly, your moral righteousness? Well, such righteousness will find its reward in this world, but it will merit you nothing before God. The human eye may not detect a flaw, but the all-searching eye of God sees innumerable blemishes, yea, damnable sins and transgressions. Just to mention one commandment, do and did you love incessantly the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength? Not? Well, then you are just as guilty as the murderer or the thief in our text, and in the court-room of heaven you are sentenced and condemned to eternal death. You, too, shall share the cells in that terrible prison with Satan and the evil spirits. — But look! The dark, threatening clouds hovering over Sinai are being penetrated by the sparkling rays of God's love and grace. The thundering of the Law is hushed, its flashing, fiery darts quenched. Mounted on Calvary, a cross arises before your eyes and hearts, and from the Savior's lips you hear the sweet, easing, and comforting words: You shall not die; you shall not suffer the penalty of your sins! I, I, your Savior, have rendered a perfect fulfillment of the Law for you. "I am the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." I have done what you should have done, and suffered the punishment which you should have suffered. I am the Mediator between God and you. I have a righteousness for you in which you can appear before God and be found unblamable, a righteousness without flaw or blemish. Flee from Sinai to Calvary! Cleave to my cross, embrace me as your Savior, and God will impute unto you my keeping of the Law and account you righteous, as though you had kept all His commandments, and had never failed in a single one. Setting aside your own righteousness and claiming for yourself my keeping of the Law, you shall and must be numbered with those who have washed their garments and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is thus that Christ, through the ministration of the Word of God, seeks each and every sinner in order

to kindle true faith in him, that he might live and be saved. And whosoever grasps Christ and His righteousness, appealing not to his own keeping of the Law, but alone to the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, saying from heart and soul, "Thou must save, and Thou alone. In my hand no price I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling," unto him will the Lord say: This day is salvation come to thee.— Truly, it holds good to this day: Jesus is come to seek and to save the forlorn and penitent sinners. Second, *He is come to give them abiding peace.*

2.

The chief of the publicans was rich. He no doubt lived in a splendid, luxuriously ornamented palace, fared sumptuously every day, and was clad in purple and fine linen. But in his splendid mansion, amidst his gold, treasures, and riches, he found not that sparkling gem—"peace." All his treasures and pleasures offered him no abiding comfort. He was shunned, hated, accursed by men, and his own conscience testified to his guilt before his God and Creator. All he possessed, and all the joys he partook of, could bring no surcease from the excruciating pangs of his accusing conscience, and the darkness could not hide from the search of the avenging Judge. And now, when Jesus came and cut still deeper, lashing his conscience to the utmost, he was near to desperation. His heart cried out in agony, How will I obtain forgiveness? I have nothing with which to blot out my sins. God's wrath is upon me, and I can find no avenue of escape. Where, O where may I find peace and rest? Where may my soul find a mooring-place in which the anchor will hold, a place affording infallible safety? "Come unto me, and I will give you rest!" is the Master's sweet answer to all His questions, which thrills his very heart with joy and rapture. In Jesus he found abiding peace, because he knew that for His sake all his sins were forgiven. He knew that now his temporal death would not terminate into everlasting death, but into the quietude and joys of heaven. What cared he now for treasures and pleasures, for his gold and silver, the contempt and sneers of the multitude? Having found Jesus, his Savior, he had found everything, and lacked nothing to make him extremely happy. Christ had given him abiding peace.

And Christ is to-day the only source of true and abiding peace, rest, and happiness. The sinful heart of natural man can never be at ease, for it must ever be in dread of the wrath that must smite it for its iniquity. The truth of this statement is proved by our own experience, as well as by nature surrounding us. The life of man has always been a very mixed state, full of uncertainty and vicissitude, of anxieties and fears. In every religious audience there are many who fall under the denomination of the unfortunate, and the rest do not know how soon they may be called to join them. For

the prosperity of no man on earth is stable and assured. Dark clouds may soon gather over the heads of those whose sky is now most bright. In the midst of the cheerful calm which they enjoy the storm that is to overwhelm them has perhaps already begun to ferment. Untold tears mark and moisten the path of wandering mankind. Trembling hands bespeak the vanity of this temporal body. In untold broken and bleeding hearts the sad, sad story is deeply inscribed: This earth is a vale of tears.—And there is another sight which incessantly presents itself. Throughout every season of the year, and during the course of almost every week, the funerals passing along the street are an undeniable corroboration of the Scripture truth: This earth is a valley of death. With undistinguishing blow that common enemy, Death, levels all. We behold a great promiscuous multitude all carried to the same abode, all lodged in the same dark and silent mansions. There mingle persons of every age and character, of every rank and condition in life: the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the gay and the grave, the renowned and the ignoble. All attempts of mankind to remove adversity to a distance and to escape the prince of terrors, Death, have proved to be futile. Power, wisdom, philosophy, wealth, were unsuccessful in finding an avenue of escape from distress and death. Science has failed to detect a herb which would counteract the deadly poison of sin and restore a blissful immortality. The fountain of perpetual youth is still to be found. In spite of the struggles of man against this common enemy, in spite of the bleeding hearts, in spite of the tears of the mother and father, in spite of pitiful cries of the cradled babe, life slowly sickens away. For it is appointed unto man to die. And then the judgment in the chambers of eternity, where all our deeds shall be weighed on the scales of incorruptible justice. Ah, all earthly treasures and pleasures vanish, all civil, official, and moral righteousness of which we boasted dwindle into nothing in that hour, yea, is an undeniable testimony of our guilt, for God will point out its imperfection. How can natural man be at ease when confronted by these stubborn facts? How can he be happy in the face of death and a terrible eternity?

But is there no one who can give us abiding peace? No fountain where purging and quickening waters flow? Oh, grandest and most wonderful message ever proclaimed in heaven and earth,—there is! Jesus is the man, the powerful Savior from sin, death, and eternal damnation, the Fountain of life. He is come to give you to this day abiding peace. Without Him the soul is enshrouded in darkness; but in the Gospel arises unto us the day-spring from on high, guiding our feet into the way of peace. He who accepts Jesus as his Savior receives His righteousness, His victory over sin, Satan, and eternal damnation. The assurance of having full pardon for all sins, of being acceptable in the sight of God, works a quiet conscience, a

peaceable heart, a hopeful trust, and so brings true and abiding joy, as St. Paul writes: "Being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And having peace with God during our temporal life, we will also have peace with Him in eternity. Temporal death becomes our servant, the chariot in which we are carried into the abode of God and the angels. The prince of terrors bends his knee before the Prince of Life. He surrenders his power and his captives to the Victor, and He promises everlasting life to everyone that believeth in Him. Verily, now every human being can have abiding peace in time and eternity.

And oh, the peace, the joy that shall follow on yonder shores! "It is the joy of those who from labor, and weariness, and sorrow have entered into rest, and comfort, and bliss. It is the joy of those from whom every taint of sin is removed, and who feel the rapture of perfect holiness. It is the joy of those who taste something of the bliss of the blessed God, at whose right hand there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. It is the joy of those who are beginning to realize a love which moved Jesus Christ to shed His blood, that the wicked servant might be saved. It is the joy of those who, while they are enjoying the bliss of heaven and great rewards, know that they owe it entirely to their Master's grace, and, casting their crowns before the throne, exclaim: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power!' And then the seraph strikes into his jubilant harp, and the celestial choir takes up the strain of the mercy never ending, the grace abounding, which surpassed all our sinning, and our heart swells with the tide of the song, as we pour out in words that exceed utterance our fervent thanks to the Redeemer, who kept us when we fell, raised us, reclaimed us, and in our last moment gave us strength to be faithful to the end."

"I am the Resurrection," etc. Oh, let us, then, hold fast to Jesus as our dearest treasure, for He alone can and will give us abiding peace. Amen.

C. H., *jun.*

Sermon Outlines.

Epistle for Whitmonday.

ACTS 10, 42—48.

Pentecost to-day. Our thoughts turn to Jerusalem and consider the events of the birthday of the Christian Church of the New Covenant. We behold the eleven, with them the 120 disciples, all declaring in many tongues the wonderful works of God for our salvation. Wonderful works. Declared by a wonderful work, the wonder of Pentecost.

The multitude at Jerusalem was "amazed" and "in doubt." They

said one to another, "What meaneth this?" So we even to-day. Especially when we contemplate the fact that the entire development of the Christian Church, both among Jew and Gentile, into its present-day power and glory, proceeds from this day.

Yes, what meaneth this? May we see as we consider:—

PENTECOST:

1. *Its message;*
2. *Its spirit.*

1.

v. 42. This fundamental. The preachers of Pentecost preach Jesus. "Of Nazareth," v. 38. "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree," v. 39. "Raised up the third day," v. 40. "It is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," v. 42. "Com-manded to preach," v. 42. This fundamental; all should, must know.

However, connected therewith v. 43. This specific. In Jesus the remission of sins. Faith in Jesus saves. This is the final analysis of the Pentecostal message.

This the message of Peter at Jerusalem on Pentecost. To sinners (comp. Acts 2) he preached the remission of sin by faith in Jesus Christ, Acts 2, 38.

In this message all the apostles united (comp. Acts 2, 14, 42).

And this is the message of all the prophets, Acts 10, 43.

May we see this clearly. The Gospel of Eden is the Gospel of Pentecost. The Gospel of Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3, is the Gospel of Peter and the apostles all. The everlasting Gospel, the theme of the saints about the throne, Rev. 7, 9—17.

2.

Its spirit. A distinction necessary.

First. At that first Pentecost, and in its preaching, there was present the Holy Spirit in His usual manifestation. He was there in the Word. Invisible, but powerful. Influence upon mind and heart. Creator of the new, the spiritual, life. In the Word, the seed, that does not return void of fruit. The Holy Spirit in the Word worked the faith of the converts of the first Pentecost. So always.

Secondly. There was, however, a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit at that time. Special as to manner, influence, and purpose.

Manner: Accompanied by a noise, etc. An outward manifestation. Visible in shape of a flame of fire.

Influence: They spake with other tongues; did wonders; were inspired, received God's Word immediately.

Purpose: Thus accredited as men of God, apostles of the Lord. Thus endorsed their message. Thus revealed and enforced the universality of the grace of God in Christ Jesus for Jews and Gentiles (cf. text, vv. 45—48).

The Holy Spirit in this Pentecostal manifestation is the special subject of study of this day. It is, however, the same Spirit that worketh through the Word in them that believe, John 3, 8.

With such knowledge may we celebrate Pentecost. Though the special manifestation of that day may not be granted us, the message resounds in all its fullness. Still the Spirit of God accompanies that Gospel with all His power, and calls out of the darkness of sin to the light of the children of God. Under His gentle, but all-powerful influence also we are waiting for the coming of the Lord to judge the quick and the dead, and rejoicing in the hope that maketh not ashamed.

H. B. H.

Epistle for Trinity Sunday.

ROM. 11, 33—36.

Festival of the Holy Trinity to-day. This festival is the last of the festival cycle of the Christian church-year, and at the same time its sum. In it combine Christmas, the festival of the love of the Father in the gift of His Son; Good Friday, the festival of the loving sacrifice of the Son for the sin of the world; Easter and Ascension, with their triumph of the Prince of Life; Pentecost, the manifestation and glorification of the Holy Spirit; all these combine in sum this day as we unite in the worship and praise of the Holy Trinity.

We contemplate a great mystery to-day; we may say the greatest of mysteries. There was mystery all along the way. Every festival of the church-year declares to us truth that surpasses our understanding. Imbued with this thought, we readily unite in the strain of the text: "O the depth," etc.

The mysteries of revelation are the subject of much controversy, doubt, and contradiction. Let us therefore, etc.

THE MYSTERIES OF REVELATION.

1. *The fact;*
2. *The necessity;*
3. *The purpose.*

1.

Divine revelation is mysterious. It is so from the beginning. No man could ever peer into its depths.

Adam and Eve in their state of innocence could not. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good," etc. Mysterious. Could not out-fathom. Faith even then was to be the source of their religious life and its basis. Misled by Satan, Eve undertook the investigation that led to ruin.

The first revelation after the fall promised the Savior from sin and its curse. Like a star of hope this Gospel sparkles in the firmament of the divine revelation of grace. But how dark are the depths out of which this star throws its comforting ray; how full of mystery!

Mysterious all along the way, and even in the fulfillment. Of the Incarnation Paul says: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

Yes, St. Paul, who penetrated into divine revelation by special grace, who "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words," to whom were granted an "abundance of revelations" (2 Cor. 12, 4. 7), says concerning himself also, and with respect to all revelation, "We know in part," and, "Now we see through a glass, darkly," 1 Cor. 13, 9. 12.

It is therefore an admitted fact, divine revelation is mysterious. To try to master, to unravel it, is beyond its purpose.

2.

Divine revelation is necessarily mysterious.

a. It is revelation of things not seen; of an, to us, unknown world. Text, v. 34.

b. It is revelation of spiritual things. (Comp. 1 Cor. 2, 14; John 3, 12.)

c. It is revelation of the infinite, and we are finite, also in our powers of conception. Have not surmounted earthly problems. We are ourselves wonderful in our own eyes, and surrounded by wonders everywhere. How should we be able to comprehend the infinite either in being or in idea?

So is mystery a necessity in divine revelation.

3.

The purpose is faith. "These are written that ye might believe," may be applied properly to all revelation.

a. We are to know what the Scriptures say of divine things. God speaks, and we should hear.

Note the difference between knowing and comprehending. We know the things of which we have the satisfactory evidence. We comprehend the things that we understand as to cause and effect. We know or apprehend the law of gravity; we do not comprehend or understand it. Electricity. So we know that there is a God, but we cannot comprehend Him. Plan of salvation. Text, v. 33.

b. We are to place our confidence in the things of divine revelation. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. (Comp. also ch. 10.)

May we, then, not stumble because of the mystery that surrounds divine revelation; it is a fact, is necessary, and has a purpose.

May we as children be children. May we learn ever more to look unto Him, our God, as He has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus, the Christ. That look is faith, the child relation. So did all the saints. Abraham.

This faith leads to sight; face to face. The clouds shall pass, and the darkness shall be light.

H. B. H.